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THE ORIGINS OF THE TECHNICAL SENSES OF THE WORD RASA

IN Indian Kātya Literature (Vol. 1 pp. 21-2) the technical sense of *rasa* in aesthetics has been explained as a direct application of the meaning 'taste' (object), by metaphor, to the aesthetic experience of enjoying a play. A play is of course seen and heard, so that to say one has had a sight or a sound of a play means no more than that one has attended a performance; it does not indicate whether one has enjoyed it. To say one has 'tasted' it, however, must imply more than simply to have seen and heard it. It cannot be understood literally; therefore, if it means anything at all, it must refer to something other than the simple sensation of a performance. That other should be, not the audible or visible speeches, gestures, costumes, etc., but something further represented by them which, though not sensed by the five senses, is perceived by the mind as being in the performance. That something further is the emotional content of the play. Its aesthetic perception in the mind is identifiable as *rasa*. This use of *rasa* in a transferred (*upacāra*) sense seems simple enough as an explanation of how the

word became a technical term in the *Naiyāśāstra* or perhaps already in the *Natasūtras* which preceded it and may have been in part incorporated in it.

However, the history of the term *rasa* may not be quite so simple, for we find it used in a technical sense, though a different one, in the ancient Pali texts of Sthaviravāda Buddhism. In that tradition it is most familiar in the commentaries, which we read in the +5 versions of Buddhaghosa. There it is used in a fourfold system of definition of elements or 'principles' (*dhamma-s*, Sanskrit *dharma-s*), giving their 'characteristics' (*lakkhaṇa*, i.e. *lakṣaṇa*) and so on. *Rasa* has the surprising sense of the 'function' (this is the usual translation of the word *kicca*, i.e. *kṛtya*, which the commentaries themselves use to explain it) or the 'accomplishment' (*sampatti*, defined as the 'complete function', e.g. *Patisambhidāmagga* *Ganthipāda* p. 26). This refers to what the principle in question does in action, acting as a cause or condition, what it accomplishes (see Buddhaghosa, *Aitthasālinī*, p. 63). The connection of this with the original senses of 'taste' or of 'juice' is much less obvious, though one might think of the latter with its secondary meanings of 'essence' and 'strength' already in the *Rgvedasamhitā* (see Grassmann s.v.).

Buddhaghosa was in fact translating older versions of these commentaries written in Old Sinhalese in the -1 and +1, so this usage appeared much earlier than the Pali versions now available; nevertheless it might still seem that it was remote

from the locus in which the *Nātyaśāstra* was developing, in Northern India, though closer chronologically (cf. *Indian Kāvya Literature* 1 p. 21). In the canonical *Tripitaka* (*Tripiṭaka*) texts, composed in India between the time of the Buddha and c. -100, *rasa* is very familiar as one of the sense objects. It is also encountered, very rarely, in a few figurative expressions such as the 'taste of freedom' (*vimutti-rasa*, *Ānguttara* 4 p. 203). This is the 'taste' of the Buddha's teaching, which is compared in its uniformity with the literal 'taste of salt' of the ocean. But this figure does not seem to offer much of a bridge to the technical sense of 'function'.

It is only in one of the latest additions to this *Tripitaka* that we suddenly come upon a usage of *rasa* which does offer some kind of transition. This addition is the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* which, though probably earlier in part, seems to have been composed mainly in the -2 (see our Introduction to Nāṇamoli's English translation, PTS 1982). It speaks in many contexts of a 'single-rasa' (*eka-rasa*) of two or more principles, especially of 'calming' and 'insight' (which work together to produce enlightenment; see e.g. Vol. 1 pp. 16, 28-31, 33-4, etc.). In these contexts 'single-taste' does not yield a satisfactory meaning, since the principles thus combined do not merge completely. They simply work together to produce a single result, thus 'single-function' or 'single-accomplishment' makes good sense.

The commentator Mahānāma (+6, Buddaghosa

did not comment on this text) sometimes explains the compound as meaning 'having the same function' (*samānakicca*, pp. 131, 134). But sometimes he explains it as 'rasa of freedom' (*vimutti-rasa*, pp. 94, 131, 134), where, however, he says *rasa* means 'accomplishment' (*sampatti*) and thus understands the compound as 'accomplishment of freedom' (p. 134). Thus he holds that *rasa* here means 'function' or 'accomplishment' as it does in the system of definitions followed by Buddaghosa and *eka-rasa* means 'single-function' or 'single-accomplishment (of freedom)'.

Later in his Commentary, however, Mahānāma has occasion to explain *vimutti-rasa* itself in the text (Vol. 2 p. 88). But instead of speaking of the 'taste' here, which of course cannot be understood literally, he maintains that *rasa* has a double meaning. First it means the 'accomplishment' (*sampatti*) of freedom (as we have already seen). But alternatively it means the 'love' (*rati*) or the 'joy' (*pīti*, i. e. *prīti*) of freedom (p. 582). This seems to connect with the later Sanskrit sense of 'love' or 'passion' (e.g. *Kumārasaṃbhava* 3 37), with 'joy' as a synonym no doubt more appropriate for the context of attaining *nirvāṇa*. Perhaps, however, this alternative sense is old and belongs genuinely to the *Tripitaka* expression. If it does, then it connects directly with the aesthetic sense of *rasa* in the *Nātyaśāstra* and, bearing in mind the double meaning, may illuminate that sense as it was developing as early as the -2. If *vimutti-rasa* has this sense already in the *Ānguttara*, then the date is carried back to the -4,

since this is a text elaborated mostly before the schisms in Buddhism and common to all schools (unlike the *Patisambhidāmagga*). Thus the *Pahārāda Suttanta* to which we referred above (Vol. 4 pp. 197-204) is found in Chinese versions in the corresponding *Ekottara* (No. 42.4 of Taishō 125) and also in the *Madhyama* (No. 35 of Taishō 26), belonging to two different schools of Buddhism which seceded from the Sthaviravāda in the -3. Unfortunately Buddhaghosa in his Commentary on the *Ānguttara* does not comment on *vimutti-rasa* here (see his Vol. 4 p. 111). Where *vimutti-rasa* occurs earlier (text Vol. 1 p. 36) he says (Vol. 2 p. 39) simply that it means *nibbāna* (*nirvāṇa*). This is not inconsistent with Mahānāma's explanation as 'the accomplishment of freedom' or 'the joy of freedom', but simply leaves it to be inferred that the 'taste' of freedom is the (actual) experience of *nirvāṇa*, which pushes us towards the aesthetic understanding of the term.

Thus in the Sthaviravāda tradition we find that *rasa* developed the sense of 'accomplishment' apparently as early as the -4, with, according to Mahānāma, a second sense of 'joy'. It was then not yet a technical term in philosophy but instead a poetic expression in connection with the attainment of *nirvāṇa*. When it became a technical term later, in the *Patisambhidāmagga* (-2) and then in the commentaries (-1), it had the sense of 'accomplishment' or 'function', the actual performance of the action of some principle. But what catches our attention here, if we are interested

in the *Nātyasāstra* and aesthetics, is that in that transitional period from the poetic use in the *Ānguttara* to the philosophical use in the *Patisambhidāmagga* the 'accomplishment' of something apparently signified also the 'joy' of it, these both being expressed by the word *rasa*. If these senses of *rasa* were in circulation in India (in North India certainly in the case of the *Ānguttara* and probably in the case of the *Patisambhidāmagga*) from the -4 onwards, they constitute a significant part of the background to the development of the technical sense of *rasa* in the *Nātyasāstra*.

In *Indian Kāvya Literature* (1 pp. 20-1) we have a 'very speculative' chronology for the development of the text of the *Nātyasāstra* which has come down to us, based on the composite nature of that text and on such outside indications as its techniques being largely in use in the theatre by the +1 (Aśvaghoṣa). There it is suggested that the verse *kārikā-s* may have existed in some form in the -1 and the prose 'commentary' on the earlier prose *sūtra-s* in the -2. As to the *sūtra-s* themselves, it is so far pure conjecture to what extent those we now find in the text, and particularly those relating to *rasa*, may have overlapped with the *Nāṭasūtra-s* known to Pāṇini (4. 3.110) in the -4. In any case it is probable that there were different recensions of *nāṭasūtra-s*, of different schools of actors, in Pāṇini's time, so that we can hardly look for a definite text. What we can do is to attempt to trace the ideas that may have been present in the *nāṭasūtra-s* of that period. Let us then consider the senses of *rasa* we have just

traced to that period in the context of the *Nātyasāstra* doctrine, which outlines a method of performance rather than a philosophical theory of aesthetics and is as practical in its own field as the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* in its way to enlightenment through the 'single-function' of calming and insight.

The central, all-pervading and therefore probably most original principle in the *Nātyasāstra* system is the arising or 'being accomplished' (*nispatti*, which sometimes has the sense of 'perfection', cf. also in Pali *nippanna* and *nippāda*) of a specific *rasa* from the conjunction of (specific) causes and effects of emotion (*bhāva*) and 'transients' (subsidiary emotions dependent on and therefore helping to indicate the main one). The formulation of this principle is known as the *rasa sūtra* (*Nātyasāstra Kāśī* p. 71). Practically everything which follows in the remainder of the text bears on this, since it is the acting of the causes and effects of emotion (the transients likewise appear usually as their immediate effects), including occasional musical accompaniment appropriate for the *rasa* and other subordinate matters. The names of the eight specific *rasa*-s being adjectives, we have eight varieties of *rasa*, such as comic, compassionate and heroic.

If we take *rasa* in the sense of 'accomplishment', it will be readily intelligible that we have these eight varieties of accomplishment. If instead we take 'joy' as the sense, we have eight varieties of joy, which seems to come closer to what is usually understood by *rasa*

here. Bhāmaha (1. 2) uses the very same word 'joy' (*priti*) as Mahānāma for that which is produced by literature, whilst the *Nātyasāstra* itself uses the synonym 'delight' (*harsa*) for the enjoyment by the audience of the emotions presented, at the end of the prose passage containing the *rasa sūtra*. Here 'delight' seems to be used in place of *rasa*, either as its synonym or to indicate its nature (the text actually reads 'delight, etc.', where it is a puzzle to know what 'etc.' could be, Abhinavagupta in his Commentary objecting to it; perhaps there are simply varieties of delight as there are varieties of *rasa*, i.e., the comic delight and so on). This seems decisive: supported by Mahānāma we can read *harsa* here in the *Nātyasāstra* as a gloss on *rasa*, 'taste means delight'. On the other hand the overlapping here of 'being accomplished' (*nispatti*) with the alternative meaning 'accomplishment' (*sampatti*) for *rasa* seems to be more than a coincidence and therefore difficult to ignore. The 'being accomplished of an accomplishment (of one of the eight kinds)' from certain conditions may appear superfluous, but it may in fact draw our attention to the fact that *rasa* is something to be accomplished, the result of a process or the actual process with its result. In any case we can compare 'the taste is accomplished' with 'the taste of freedom means the accomplishment of freedom'. 'Delight' seems most convincing as the main (transferred) sense of 'taste' here, but 'accomplishment' can very well be felt as a subordinate sense. But let us turn now from the audience to the actors, to the *Nātyasāstra*

as setting out a practical method of producing delight in the audience.

The *Nātyāśāstra*, as we have noted, is essentially a practical handbook, with only occasional suggestions of any theoretical background or any interest in possible theoretical conclusions (see *Indian Kāvya Literature* 1 p. 26). *Rasa* is treated as a practical matter and not only as the aim of delighting an audience but also as something linking together all the ingredients to accomplish that aim. Of course, the nature of the delight in an audience is something which can be studied philosophically, to determine its nature, to compare it with other kinds of pleasure, to contrast it with actual emotion, which has a special relation to it, and so forth. Such investigations were made in due course, culminating as far as we know in those of Abhinavagupta, a critic and philosopher. But the actors were not primarily philosophers; they were gaining a livelihood in the theatre by being entertaining: theories would be of minor interest to them and their attention was focussed on the practical technique of their profession. In fact this situation of opposition between actors and critics continues throughout the history of Indian theatre and we see it clearly reflected, for example, in the *Natāñkuśa* (+15), where the anonymous critic rebukes the actors of his day for tampering with texts, displaying their virtuosity at the expense of realism, absurd breakings of the dramatic structure and reversing the development of the action and even, as culminating aberration, spoiling the *rasa* by not using the appropriate dress

and with digressions brought in from the *Purāṇas* (see *Indian Kāvya Literature* Vol. 5, §§2765, 2768, 2793-9, etc.). Such a separation of *rasa*, at least as perceived by a critic, from virtuosity in performance seems inconceivable in the time of the *Nātyāśāstra*, unless the actors had their own ideas about *rasa* which were purely practical, not related to any philosophical context of what was appropriate but perhaps attuned to the response of a certain type of audience (thus the *Vyaṅgyavyākhyā* on *Tāpatīsañivaraya* distinguishes the 'ordinary people', who like to see something quite external such as miming a creeper, from the real 'spectators' who enjoy the play itself, see *Indian Kāvya Literature* Vol. 5 §3433).

The technique of the *Nātyāśāstra*, then, is based on *rasa* not merely as an aim but as a kind of organizing principle in performance: no subject matter at all can be presented without it (*na hi rasād na kuteśāप्य arthaḥ pravartate*, same prose passage on p. 71, introducing the *rasa sūtra*). After this, the *Nātyāśāstra* goes on to enumerate the causes and effects of emotion for each of the eight *rasa*-s and the appropriate transients for them, all of which are to be presented on the stage by the actors in the rôles of characters experiencing the corresponding emotions. All the details on acting (speech, gesture, etc.) in the chapters which follow are subordinated to the same unifying principle of a specific *rasa*. Without losing sight of the *rasa* as ultimate aim, as delight of one of these specific kinds in the audience, which naturally captured the attention of critics and

philosophers, we must consider whether the sense of 'accomplishment' might suit this unifying principle of the stage performance and perhaps be what the actors had immediately in mind in their practice.

If the 'being accomplished (*nispatti*) of an accomplishment (*rasa*, as a process, or a 'function' being completed when separate elements combine into one effect) from the conjunction of causes of emotion, effects of emotion and transients' is a possible translation of the *rasa sūtra*, we may then ask what exactly is this 'accomplishment'. It is, in the first place, one of the eight qualities specified, namely the comic, compassionate, heroic and the others, for *rasa* pure and simple is not being accomplished. *Rasa* as such is not accomplished or enjoyed; there is always the specific quality or content, such as the comic, which might be understood as the effect of the *rasa* as function and accomplishment, though as adjective and noun they are not separable. The comic is accomplished, not some general *rasa*, not 'accomplishment' in the abstract, which would be meaningless. It follows from this that the *Nāyaśāstra* simply describes the 'accomplishment' of each of the eight specifics, the comic and so on. We should glance at some of the details in order to see what this 'comic-accomplishment', 'compassionate-accomplishment', 'heroic-accomplishment', etc. means.

In the case of the comic (*Nāyaśāstra* p. 74 Kāśī, we confine ourselves to the prose), whose 'essence' (*ātman*) is stated to be the emotion 'mirth' (*hāsa*), the

'causes of the emotion' are seeing extraordinary dress and ornaments, impudence, greed, quarrelling, false speech, deformities, the extolling of faults, etc. It is quite obvious how the actors will accomplish such things, the emotion of mirth being presented as in one character who sees and hears another acting in the ways described. The effects of the emotion are listed as the quivering of the lips, teeth, nose and cheeks, either opening wide or contracting the eyes, sweating, colouring of the face, holding the sides, etc. Obviously this is the acting of amusement and laughter when filled with mirth. The transients are lassitude, dissimulation, bewilderment, drowsiness, sleeping, awaking, envy, etc. These also should occur in the character amused. A note is added to the effect that the comic has two forms, according as one simply laughs oneself or makes another (character) laugh. Thus the amused and laughing character will act the effects and sometimes a transient and in the second case will make another character laugh at the causes of the emotion. It seems clear also that the character in whom the causes of the emotion are displayed can himself be amused and laugh. Such are the details which the actors have to work on in the 'comic-accomplishment'. Of course the audience will laugh if they are successful, but the point suggested here is that the actors have the 'accomplishment' (*rasa*) in mind as their guide: they are acting with an eye to the comic in everything they do, because some of the things mentioned need not necessarily be comic but must here be presented in relation to that only.

The other 'accomplishments' need not be exactly parallel to this. Thus the 'compassionate-accomplishment' is said (p. 75) to have its 'source' (*prabhava*) in the emotion 'grief'. The 'sensitive' (*śringāra*) with its source in 'love' is the only other *rasa* which similarly has a 'source' instead of an 'essence', except that the 'furious' has both but with its emotion as essence. The causes of the emotion in the case of the compassionate are such things as separation from the 'desired' person (it has been anticipated on p. 73 that it is 'compassionate' when there is no expectation of reunion), loss of wealth, union with various disasters such as death and so on. The effects of the emotion are weeping, etc. and there is a long list of transients such as 'indifference' (disgust with the world), depression, anxiety and so on. All these have to be acted by the character experiencing grief, but in such a way as to excite the compassionate, the latter being the guiding principle in the performance.

The essence of the heroic is 'courage' (*utsāha*, 'energy') in the 'highest' (*uttama*) kind of character (p. 77). The causes of the emotion are the absence of delusion, resolution, (good) policy, discipline and abundant valour, power, glory (or 'courage', *pratāpa*) and majesty. The effects of the emotion are constancy, bravery, firmness, generosity, confidence, etc. The transients are contentment, reflection, pride, agitation, ferocity, indignation, remembrance, horripilation (thrilling), etc. All this is very straightforward. The character having courage or energy possesses the causes

and shows also the effects of this emotion and the transients according to circumstances.

The 'horrific' (*bibhatsa*), whose essence is the emotion 'disgust' (p. 78), is a somewhat strange 'accomplishment' to feature prominently with these others. One might suspect that in origin it owed much to Buddhism as revulsion against the disgusting world and was prominent in Buddhist plays of the earliest period of the classical theatre; in extant plays it is rarely prominent. Be this as it may, the causes of the emotion are listed as hearing or seeing or narrating, etc., what is repulsive, unloved, impure (correcting from Abhinavagupta), undesired. Its effects are 'rolling' in all gestures and of the face and eyes, anxiety ('searing the heart'), spitting, alarm, etc. The transients are forgetfulness, agitation, bewilderment, sickness, dying, etc.

The essence of the apprehensive is the emotion fear (p. 77), the causes of which are distorted cries, seeing apparitions, etc., entering a forest, dying and seeing, hearing, narration, etc., of the death or imprisonment of one's relatives. Its effects are trembling of the hands and legs and so on and the transients are paralysis and many others. The marvellous is equally straightforward with its essence the emotion astonishment (p. 78), whose causes are seeing the divine, obtaining desired wishes and so on, effects expanding of the eyes, etc. and transients tears and so on.

The account of the furious (*raudra*) is more complicated (p. 76). Its essence is the emotion anger. But

then it is said to have a 'source' (*prabhava*), which is in demons (*rakṣas-es*), demons (*dānava-s*) and haughty humans. Further, its cause is war (*samgrāmahetukah* might equally mean it causes war). The causes of the emotion are anger (it seems strange that anger should be the cause of anger, but Abhinavagupta, Vol. I p. 320, says it means another's anger, the previous statement referring to those who are angry by their own nature), outrage, insult, disrespect, untrue speech, harsh words, malice, selfishness, etc. Then it has some special business, namely striking, cleaving, crushing, cutting, breaking, attacking, robbing, attacking with weapons, fighting, blood, drawing a bow, etc. After this the effects of the emotion are listed as red eyes, sweating, frowning, compressing the hands, teeth and lips, quivering of the cheeks, rubbing the hands together, etc. The transients are bewilderment, courage (*utsāha*, or 'energy'), agitation, indignation, rashness, ferocity, sweating, trembling, horripilation, stammering, etc. Then it is added that demons, etc., are by their own nature (*svabhāvataḥ*) furious, because they have many arms, many faces, hair which is shaking, scattered and red, red and prominent eyes and terrible black bodies. This makes them models of the furious. Also it is because all their speech and gestures are acted as naturally furious from beginning to end. And men who follow them, fighting, should have the furious *rasa* in agreement with them. It is not immediately clear why this 'furious-accomplishment' should have these additional topics not found in the others, with the

demons brought in as a special set of characters peculiar to it. Then it seems to be of two kinds, innate (by own nature) and imposed by provocation (anger causing anger, etc.). Unlike the other accomplishments it has some special stage business, namely the miming of fighting. Otherwise, however, it seems a simple enough account of what the actors do, with more direct representation in being dressed as demons and fighting than for the other 'accomplishments'. Such an account of a *rasa* which again is of minor importance in the extant repertory may be in part a legacy from a period before the full elaboration of the doctrine of acting simply causes and effects of emotion and transients, in which one would expect everything described here to be included under those heads. The unifying principle, however, is as always the 'accomplishment' (*rasa*), namely the furious.

We have kept till last the *rasa* which stands first in the enumeration and in popularity, because it too presents peculiar difficulties. In the first place *śringāra* is hardly translatable. Etymologically it would mean 'pointed' (like an arrow) or 'peaked' (like a mountain). This might refer to heightened sensibility or sensitivity. But it relates specifically to the emotion 'love' (*rati*), not to any of the others. As noted above, like the compassionate it has a 'source' (love, as the compassionate has grief) instead of an 'essence'. This at least stresses that it is something quite different in nature from its corresponding emotion. That should indeed be obvious: considered as a 'taste' or 'joy' to

be produced in the audience, the *śringāra* must be a contemplation or enjoyment of the spectacle of characters in love and this cannot itself contain the essence of love. It is the experience of a story about love brought to the stage, or of witnessing the happiness of lovers, and sometimes their unhappiness. There seems to be no word in English for this. But the *Nātyāśāstra* immediately (p. 73) assigns it an 'essence' quite different from its emotion, namely 'brilliant dress'. This may remind us of the demons in relation to the furious, but the positions are reversed because there the demons are the 'source' and anger is the 'essence'. This is then explained as because whatever in the world (not in the theatre) is pure, fresh or beautiful is compared (reading *upamiyate*, the other reading being inferred', *anumiyate*) with *śringāra*. A person wearing brilliant dress is said to be 'possessing *śringāra*'. The text goes on to insist on attractive and brilliant dress being established as the essence of *śringāra*, in the usage of the teachers, as one of the terms used in drama. That would suggest something like 'brilliance' as the original meaning of *śringāra*. We use 'sensitive' as a mere stopgap (having in mind 'tender' as well as 'pointed' and 'brilliant').

The text continues, to state that the sensitive has women and men as 'cause' (again only the furious has such a special 'cause'). Its characters are at the height of youth. After mentioning that it has two states, 'union' and 'frustration', the text lists the causes and effects of emotion and the transients for

the first of these. The causes are the season, etc., the desired person and all kinds of social pleasures; the effects are movements of the eyes and so on and playful and sweet gestures and speech, etc.; the transients are nearly all (only terror, lassitude, ferocity and disgust are excluded as obviously contradictory to it). In the case of frustration only the effects of the emotion are listed and it is strange that they are all taken from the transients. Certainly these may appear as effects of love when frustrated, nevertheless it seems to deviate from the usual system. The causes of the emotion are presumably the same as in 'union'. After this the text raises the question of how emotions (transients apparently) related to the compassionate can occur here, when the sensitive has its source in love. The answer to this is complex. First it has already been stated that the sensitive consists of both union and frustration. Ten stages have been described in the *vaiśikāśāstra-s* (the treatises on harlotry, predecessors of the extant *Kāmasūtra* or of part of it). These will be described under 'universal acting' (*Nātyāśāstra* Chapter 24 Kāśī). Most of them in fact belong to the situations of frustration. If there is expectation of union, despite obstacles separating the lovers, we have 'frustration'. If there is no such expectation, it is the compassionate *rasa*. Thus the sensitive is connected with all the emotions.

We may try to clarify the nature of the 'sensitive' by considering it as an 'accomplishment'. In the case of 'union', at any rate, the actors may keep

something resembling 'brilliance' in mind as unifying principle. Their dress will be beautiful and so on and the atmosphere might be called festive. In the case of frustration, however, all that lies for the time being in the past, as something to remember whilst emotions more akin to the compassionate are represented. The 'brilliance' is obviously dimmed, but not completely extinguished unless the 'accomplishment' actually changes to the compassionate. What may be decisive here is that 'brilliance' suits an 'accomplishment' (or perhaps a 'function') much better than a 'taste', an 'aesthetic experience' or a 'joy' produced in the audience. If we understand both Mahānāma's senses of *rasa* here (disregarding 'taste' in its literal sense), we have a 'brilliant-accomplishment' by the actors producing a 'brilliant-joy' in the audience, bearing in mind that 'brilliant' (*ujjala*) here glosses 'pointed' (*sringāra*) and is associated with youth, beauty, purity, freshness and lovers. Let us add here the full list of 'causes of the emotion' which we omitted above: the season, flowers, cosmetics, jewellery, the desired person, objects of pleasure (of the senses, music, etc.), enjoying excellent buildings, experiencing going to a park, hearing and seeing amusements and play etc. All this is to be accomplished with reference to the 'pointed' unifying principle as we have just tried to contextualize it.

Thus if we read the *Nātyasāstra* in the light of Mahānāma's explanation of *rasa* in the *Patisambhidāmagga*, where the latter is actually borrowing from the

Āṅguttara, we seem to find the term richer in meaning for the actors than if we just take it as 'taste' and 'aesthetic experience' according to the etymology and Abhinavagupta's much later commentary. According to Mahānāma *rasa* means 'accomplishment' (and is associated with a unifying function), which relates to the practice of meditation or of acting; or 'joy', which is the successful result and the delight of the audience as well as the satisfaction of the actors. It may be noted finally that Mahānāma and the *Nātyasāstra* are complementary: the Sthaviravāda tradition clearly establishes 'accomplishment' as an early meaning of *rasa* (the *Patisambhidāmagga* itself does that), with 'joy' as a second sense according to Mahānāma but not clearly confirmed in earlier texts; in the *Nātyasāstra* on the other hand 'delight' is clearly used for the enjoyment of the audience, apparently in place of *rasa* and as a synonym for it, whilst it is only our conjecture that *rasa* has the sense of 'accomplishment' as well, when taken as the unifying element in the method of the actors. Putting these two pieces of evidence together, we find both senses, 'accomplishment' and 'joy', current in an ancient period when the text of the *Nātyasāstra* (or of *Nāṭasūtra-s* and *Bhāgya*) was just beginning to be developed. The actors could hardly have been unaware of these two senses in current speech and it seems probable that they chose the term *rasa* because it offered this valuable ambiguity. Theatrical writers on *nātya*, critics and philosophers, may have lost sight of the practical sense of 'accomplishment'

which the term had for actors and concentrated on 'joy' and aesthetic experience. In Sthaviravāda the opposite development took place, for 'accomplishment' and 'function' became the regular senses of *rasa* in the commentarial tradition (from the -1 onwards), 'joy' being remembered only as a second sense in archaic contexts, in the *Tripitaka*.

For the ancient actors of India, *rasa*, like many other key terms in the history of ideas, may have been creatively ambiguous and given them a supporting principle throughout their performances as well as a single aim and fulfilment for each occasion.

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A NOTE ON PĀṇINI 6. 1. 87

I

PĀṇINI 6. 1. 87 contains the rule for the combination of a final ā with a dissimilar vowel which is known as *guṇa Saṃdhi*. The standard illustrations of this Saṃdhi are: UPA + INDRA = UPENDRA; RAMĀ + īSA = RAMEŚA; GAṄGĀ + UDAKAM = GAṄGODAKAM; and KR̥ṢNA + RDDHI = KR̥ṢNARDDH. ¹ It will be clear from an examination of these and other examples² that the short or long nature of the final a has no bearing on the Saṃdhic outcome. This paper is an attempt to examine why it should be so.

One may begin by making the observation that Pāṇini's rule may be split into two parts. The first part deals with the combination of the final ā with all vowels except ī and ī. The second part deals with the combination of the final ā with ī and ī. For carrying out the second operation another rule of Pāṇini (I. 1. 51) has to be invoked. This creates the

¹ See Rāmacandra Panasikara Śāstri, ed., *Bhatojjidīkṣitavīracitā Vaiyākaranasiddhāntakaumudi*, Benaras: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1948. p. 55.

² See William Dwight Whitney, *Sanskrit Grammar*, Harvard University Press, 1971, p. 43, para. 127.